

What is claimed is:

1. In an information distribution system, apparatus comprising:
a storage unit, for storing a plurality of programs, each program
5 being associated with a relatively high bitrate information stream and a
corresponding relatively low bitrate information stream;
a server, for retrieving one or more of said programs from said
storage unit, said storage unit selectively multiplexing, for each retrieved
program, a respective one of said relatively high bitrate information
10 stream and said corresponding relatively low bitrate information stream
to form a multiplexed information stream; and
a communications link having a finite bandwidth, for transporting
said multiplexed information stream; wherein
said server preferentially multiplexing said relatively high bitrate
15 information stream associated with each of said retrieved programs;
said server, in response to a condition of insufficient
communication link bandwidth, multiplexing said respective relatively
low bitrate information stream associated with one or more of said
retrieved programs.